

Message Text

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FOR: IAA AND IMV

E.O. 11652 : NA
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SUBJ : WGBH BOSTON-NTV LAGOS POTENTIAL FOR TV CO-OF

DEPT: AF/W

1. ALAN POTTER, PRODUCTION/UNIT MANAGER, SPORTS, WGBH BOSTON, VISITED LAGOS MARCH 3-6, TO VIEW THE FINAL MATCHES OF THE 1978 LAGOS TENNIS CLASSIC (GRAND PRIX) COSPONSORED BY DUNLOP AND THE NIGERIAN TOBACCO COMPANY, AND TO SURVEY THE POSSIBILITY OF ARRANGING A WGBH/NIGERIAN TELEVISION CO-PRODUCTION OF THE 1979 CLASSIC. POTTER'S VISIT, WHICH WAS FINANCED BY WESTINGHOUSE CORPORATION(PITTSBURGH), GREW OUT OF EMBASSY EFFORTS TO ELICIT LOCAL AMERICAN BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR MAJOR CULTURAL/SPORTING EVENTS IN NIGERIA. WESTINGHOUSE'S LOCAL SUBSIDIARY IS INSTALLING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN NIGERIA AND IS INTERESTED IN A MORE ACTIVE PROMOTIONAL EFFORT ON BEHALF OF ITS ACTIVITES IN NIGERIA.

2. ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE FOR POTTER TO MEET WITH NTV'S TOP MANAGEMENT, TO TOUR THEIR FACILITIES, TO ASSESS THEIR TECHNICAL CAPABILITY AND LOOK OVER THEIR EQUIPMENT, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS UNCLASSIFIED

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"THE BEST AVAILABLE" AND ON PER WITH WGBH'S. NTV'S GENERAL MANAGER ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTED THE GENERAL PROPOSAL OF A CO-PRODUCTION WITH WGBH. HE SAW SUCH PROJECTS AS OFFERING NTV AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR REACHING AN IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF THE PREVIOUSLY INACCESSIBLE AMERICAN AUDIENCE, AND CITED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL KNOW-HOW HIS PRODUCERS AND TECHNICIANS WOULD GAIN FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE

WORKING WITH AMERICAN TEAMS. HE FURTHER HOPED WGBH WOULD WANT TO COVER OTHER EVENTS IN NIGERIA IN ADDITION TO THE 1979 TENNIS CLASSIC. POTTER EXPRESSED INTEREST IN A VARIETY OF OTHER NIGERIAN CULTURAL OR SPORTING ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING FESTAC), AND DESCRIBED WGBH'S MINORITY SERIES FOR POSSIBLE PLACEMENT ON NTV. BOTH STATIONS AGREED TO VIEW SELECTED PROGRAM WITH THE INTENTION OF RECIPROCAL PURCHASES.

3. UPON RETURNING POTTER PLANS TO DEVELOP A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION BY WGBH. HE WOULD THEN SELL WESTINGHOUSE FINANCING BEFORE PRESENTING DETAILED PROPOSALS TO NTV LAGOS. MEANWHILE, THE POST WILL BE ALERT TO EVENTS WHICH MIGHT BE OF MORE IMMEDIATE INTEREST TO WGBH.

4. THE POST HAS SUGGESTED THAT POTTER BRIEF IAA AND IMV OFFICERS AND KEEP THEM INFORMED AS HIS PLANS DEVELOP. IF THESE PROPOSALS PROVE SUCCESSFUL, IT COULD BE AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN OUR RELATIONS WITH NTV AND COULD RESULT IN A CULTURAL EXCHANGE VENTURE THAT MAY BE ENTIRELY OR PARTIALLY FINANCED BY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

5. COMMENT: THE POST HAS FOR SOME TIME FELT THAT CO-PRODUCTIONS WITH NTV WERE POSSIBLE. THEY ARE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN A CO-PRODUCTION WITH BAVARIAN TV. OUR CLOSE COLLABORATION AND THE EXCELLENT SUPPORT FROM USIA WASHINGTON DURING GEN. OBADANAJO'S UNCLASSIFIED

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STATE VISIT LAST YEAR, GREATLY ENHANCED THIS POSSIBILITY. HOW THAT WGBH HAS ENTERED THE PICTURE, WE SHOULD SEE HOW THE INITIATIVE DEVELOPS BEFORE SUGGESTING DIRECT FINANCIAL SUPPORT. LEWIS

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